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## FOREIGN DESK

## Saudis Strip Citizenship From Backer Of Militants

By YOUSSEF M. IBRAHIM, ( Special to The New York Times ) 641 words

Published: April 10, 1994

Saudi Arabia has taken a highly unusual step in stripping a scion of one of its wealthiest merchant families of citizenship because he supports Muslim fundamentalist movements active in Arab countries.

Saudi newspapers quoted the authorities on Friday as saying they had acted against the man, Ussama Bin Laden, "because of his irresponsible behavior that contradicts the interests of Saudi Arabia and harms sisterly countries, and his refusal to obey instructions issued to him."

A Saudi businessman said Friday that the decision was also coupled with a move to freeze Mr. Bin Laden's assets in Saudi Arabia. He is believed to control additional millions of dollars in foreign bank accounts.

Mr. Bin Laden has spent much of the last two years in Khartoum, the capital of the Islamic fundamentalist republic of the Sudan, where he is a confidant and acknowledged financial backer of Sheik Hassan al-Turabi, a leading fundamentalist in the Middle East.

Operating from a large estate he owns there, Mr. Bin Laden has taken part in several conferences of militant fundamentalist movements that were held in Khartoum over the last four years, and is reputed to have placed his vast wealth at the disposal of militant Islamic causes from Afghanistan to Algeria. A Warning Is Seen

In the last year several Western and Arab intelligence reports have linked him to the bankrolling of camps set up in the Sudan where various Islamic groups train their militants.

The action against Mr. Bin Laden was seen as a warning to other wealthy Saudis residing in Saudi Arabia to cut ties they have cultivated in the last two decades with militant Islamic groups in Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Algeria.

Two years ago a French weekly published a photocopy of a check for \$1 million written to Abassi Madani, the leader of the Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria, by Youssef Abdelatif Jamil, whose family owns the largest car sales and service business in Saudi Arabia.

The most common financial backing of these militants by wealthy Saudis and other tycoons in Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates is through support of Islamic charities or so-called Islamic businesses, which in turn pump money to the militants.

On Wednesday, for instance, Egypt arrested a Kuwaiti, Abdelrahman al-Mejeibal, who was said to be carrying large amounts of cash from the Kuwaiti Society for the Revival of Islamic Heritage for the benefit of parallel organizations in Egypt that the Egyptian authorities suspect to be fronts for militant groups. Arab Countries Complain

Saudi Arabia has responded slowly to complaints from Arab countries victimized by Islamic violence, particularly Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria, which asked that it reign in its rich fundamentalists. Last year, the Saudi Government took one step in that direction when it banned the collection of funds for Islamic charities inside Saudi Arabia without specific government permission and controls.

Egyptian and other Arab diplomats still appear to be skeptical about the degree of Saudi determination.

"It may be the beginning of the end of the sort of benign neglect observed by the Saudi Government toward those funding terrorists," said a senior Egyptian official who asked not to be identified. "But they have to do a lot more to convince that they are serious."

The overall Saudi attitude toward the radical Islamic movements active in almost every Arab country has been, at best, ambivalent. Saudi newspapers and broadcast outlets, all under some form of direct official control, have occasionally taken a sympathetic view of fundamentalist movements, presenting their violent struggle to grab power as a somewhat legitimate quest.

Many of the leading Islamic fundamentalist figures have lived in Saudi Arabia for years or often visited the country over the last decade.

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